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# IMPRISONMENT AND ESCAPE

OF

LIEUT. COLONEL LINCOLN.

*W. S. Lincoln*

THE close of the 15th of May, 1864, left me, with many of my companions in arms, wounded and in the hands of the enemy. We had marched, the day before, a distance of twenty-one miles in seven hours, with but one halt, and that of only *ten* minutes. Now the sun had sent down his fiercest rays, now the clouds had poured their contents, in torrents, upon our devoted heads. Tired, wet through, and hungry, —for we had not a morsel to eat with us,— in the thick darkness of the overhanging woods, we laid down, in line of battle, upon our arms. *Twice* the volleys of musketry from opposing parties on our left had caused us to spring up in line; and again, we had been roused, before dawn, by our own officers, and held in readiness for any movement which might be made. Later on in the morning, we had passed hours in marching and countermarching for position, and still later had met the attack of the enemy, and after a sharp and severe fight, had been badly beaten. As the day closed, some sixty of us found ourselves stretched in and around an old barn, near the battlefield, closely guarded by Rebel soldiers. During the early hours of the evening, and well into the night, our party received accessions from such wounded Union soldiers as were able to make their way unaided; or, too severely wounded to walk, were brought in by the enemy. Occasionally, by the light of a lantern, some Rebel officer would examine us. "Are there any Confederate wounded here?" was asked by Major Meem, Medical Director on the staff of Gen. Breckenbridge, as he stood at the head of a goodly sized party of Rebel surgeons. No answer was returned by any of us, as the question was addressed to no one in particular. "I say, you d—d Yankee sons of b—s, are there any Confederate wounded here?" "No, sir!" was the reply. "Then this is no place for us, gentlemen!" said the Major; and he turned away. Among the wounded was Capt. Graham of the 54th Pennsylvania. He had been shot directly through the right lung, and each breath he drew sent the air *whistling* through the wound, disturbing the dying, who laid near. "I wish, Major," said I to Meem, "you would give a look to this officer, before you go." "We've got enough to do to attend to the confederate wounded," said he; but spite of the remark turned to comply with the request. As he drew the shirt from the wound in the Captain's breast, he broke out with "All he wants is a *d—d good horn of whiskey*," and walked off. All his companions followed, save one, (I wish I knew and could give his name), who, lingering behind, closed the wound with a piece of plaster, and gave him to drink from a jug in the hands of an Orderly.

With the morning light we were able to recognize, and enquire as to each others condition. Another night passed, with the addition of a few more to our number, among whom was Capt. Fox of ours, from whom we learned of the death of Capt. Bacon, of our color company.

Late in the afternoon of this day (Tuesday), with an armed Rebel on each side of us, Capt. Fox and myself made a slow march into town, and to the office of the Provost Marshal. Here our names and rank were registered, and we were directed to report ourselves at the hospital. At this place our wounds were examined and partially dressed; a thick slice of bread (the only food which either of us had had since Sunday morning), was given to each, and we were told that we might "look out for ourselves" till we were wanted. We procured lodgings at the Village hotel, where we staid till Thursday, when we were informed that we were wanted again at the hospital. Reporting, we found drawn up before the door of the building a long wagon, without cover, without springs, with no seat, and not even straw upon which to sit or lie, into which we were directed to get, as we were to be sent, in this way, to Harrisonburg, some twenty miles away. We were now joined by Lieut. Ammidon, of ours, who had been captured, but fortunately not wounded. Our journey was a sad and tiresome one. But it had an end; and late in the afternoon, when our teams stopped in the middle of the main street of Harrisonburg, opposite the Court House, we stepped down and out, at the invitation of our guard. It was a curious coincidence, that here, as on the battlefield, the first question asked me by the guard was the *whispered one*, "*Are you a Mason?*" In the light of subsequent experience, I can't help thinking that I should have fared better, while a prisoner, if I could have answered this question in the affirmative. Here we took a sad farewell of Ammidon, who was at once hurried on further south to Andersonville, and his death. We were now escorted to the hospital which was established in the buildings of the Academy, at the outskirts of the town, and reporting to the Surgeon, were by him ordered to report to the officer in charge of prisoners at the Court House. Entering, we were warmly greeted by Lieut. Walker and some forty or fifty of our own wounded men who had preceded us. We were assigned to the upper story of the building. There was the *bare floor* to sleep on; no straw was furnished us. Our blankets, tin cups, canteens, indeed everything of the kind had previously been taken from us. Three times a day, coffee, bread and *sheep meat*, as the Rebel soldiers called it, cut in cubes about two by two, were brought us. It so happened that my place on the floor, was next the door, as the room was entered. The coffee was brought in a large water pail, a small tin cup floating in it, from which we were to drink. As the bearer entered, he turned to me. Filling the cup I put it to my lips, to take it away again with my thirst unquenched. My lips were blistered by the boiling liquid. And when, after going the rounds of the room, the soldier was at the door, on his way out, I reached again for the cup, I was met with the *pleasant* remark, "Let that alone, you've had your chance before." And so it *happened* always. We had many visitors, most of them apparently coming to see how we looked, as they exchanged no words with us. Some came, however, from interest in the cause for which we suffered; or drawn by sympathy for us, on account of our wounds. Among the latter was a Mrs. Lewis, wife of a prominent merchant in the place, whose kindness of heart overbalanced the contempt in which she held the "myrmidons of the Tyrant Lincoln," and who furnished to many of us supplies from her own table as long as we remained in the Court House. Among the former was Col. Asa S. Gray, and his daughter, Miss Orra Gray, staunch lovers of the Union, both of them; ministering angels in our hours of despondency, of want, of suffering, and of death! To their unwearied attention, and unstinted supply of whatever they could procure, which in any way would contribute to our welfare, all of us were indebted for comfort, and some of us for restored health and life. Dr. George H. Gilmer, a physician of the town, not only visited us, but attended to our wounds, till the arrival of Dr. Allen, assistant Surgeon on the Staff of the 34th regiment; and in other ways did much to relieve us. Capt. McNiel, too, old Guerilla that he was, called often, and showed us much kindness, after his fashion.

"Have you written home, Colonel?" asked he one day. "Yes, Captain!" "How



did you send your letter?" "By way of Richmond and flag of truce boat." "Pshaw!" said he, "your folks will never hear from you by that route! Here," said he, "here is some paper; I see you've got pen and ink; write a letter if you want to;—pay for a Confederate Post Office stamp,—I must make you contribute that much to our cause,—give me your word that you won't write anything you ought not to—seal it up and give it to me—and I'll put it into one of *your* post offices for you, though, mind, I don't promise that I won't rob it *first*." He was as good as his word; and, of all the letters written home by me while a prisoner, all of which were forwarded via Richmond and flag of truce boat, this one was the only one which reached its destination. Major Meem too, called occasionally. Once, before our surgeon came up, as he entered the room, I asked him if he would not look at a little fellow of ours, whose wrist was terribly shattered by a Minie ball. "I suppose you wan't I should look at you, too! Why the devil didn't you leave one of your own surgeons to take care of you?" said he: but the little fellow had already taken off his handkerchief, and held out his wrist, swollen, mangled, and of a *dark, deep red color*. "Erysipelas there, Major, isn't there?" "Yes." "His arm will have to be amputated, won't it?" "Yes." "Won't you operate?" "We can't be troubled with your men, Colonel! we've got our hands full with our own," said the Major, as he turned and walked away. So life went on with us; till, on the afternoon of the 25th, *ten days* after the battle, we were gladdened by the arrival of Dr. Allen, one of our own surgeons, who had come up to take care of our wounds. Finding that we were packed too closely, he at once applied himself to securing other and more airy, and comfortable quarters; and having effected our removal, set about examining our wounds. The little fellow, whose wrist was so badly shattered, and whose arm Major Meem had at a later day amputated, was among the first to receive attention. Upon removing the bandage from the stump, the *bone was found to project three and one-half inches beyond the "flap."* this, by actual measurement. Was this accidental? or was it in furtherance of the *interest*, as explained below, in the case of Ryan, whose left knee joint was shattered badly, and who now was low and sinking. "This man," said Dr. Allen to Major Meem, "ought to have had his leg amputated immediately after being wounded." "Yes!" said the Major, "I thought so." "You saw him, then?" "Oh yes!" "Well, why didn't you operate?" "Oh, Doctor!" was the reply, "*you know its for our interest to kill all your men we can*"—and the conversation ended.

After Dr. Allen's arrival, and before he had removed us to our new quarters, and while he was temporarily absent, from the Court House, an ambulance was driven up, and a guard, getting out, announced that "Col. Lincoln, Capt. Fox, Capt. Graham, and Lieut. Walker would take seats in it," as they were about to be started off South. To hear was to obey. In the effort to comply with the order, Lieut. Walker fainted, before he had reached the ground floor; Col. Lincoln managed to get down, and part way to the ambulance; while the two Captains succeeded in reaching and taking their seats in the vehicle. At this stage in the movement, Dr. Allen made his appearance. In much excitement, he remonstrated at the cruelty of the order; and obtained a promise of delay, till he could find the proper authorities, and remonstrate against its execution. He might as well have whistled against the wind, for all the effect he produced. The order had been issued, and would not be countermanded. Discouraged, he was returning, when he accidentally met Major *Hunter Johnson, Acting Post Quartermaster*, who hearing his representation that the removal of Col. Lincoln and Lieut. Walker would greatly endanger their lives, took the responsibility of countermanding the order, so far as those officers were concerned. He could not save the two Captains, however, and they were driven away. The days dragged their slow length along. Nothing but an occasional death varied the monotony of our life; till one morning we were visited by a rebel officer, who asked us for our *parole*. We demurred, till, upon his solemn assurance that there was no Union force nearer than

Cedar Creek, and at present, not the most remote possibility of our being recaptured, we yielded, and gave the required pledge. The *next day*, however, Hunter, with his army, marched into town! Before marching away, he visited the hospital—cheered us by his promise, that, upon reaching Stanton, he would send down a train with ambulances enough to take us all to Martinsburg; and left with us liberal supplies of flour, coffee, tea, sugar, &c., morphine, quinine, chloroform, stimulants and other medicines, and bandages sufficient for *our* wants. He left a large supply of all these articles for the rebel wounded, of whom there were more than two hundred in town. He left also clothing, stockings, uniforms and boots for all of our men. He had hardly gone, before the hospital was entered by a party of soldiers, headed by a man in rebel uniform, who gave his name as *Capt. Jourdan* of Rosser's command, and who robbed it of *all* the liquors, *all* the morphine, quinine, and chloroform *we had*; *all* the coffee, sugar, and tea they could carry off; each man taking *one* and some *two* suits of uniforms, and one or more pairs of boots. Days passed; and as with their passage, without the appearance of the train promised by Hunter, hope of speedy liberation fled, some of our men lost courage, drooped, and died!

We were denied the privilege of burying our dead in the village cemetery; and it was only by the persevering energy of *Miss Gray*, that permission was given us to deposit their remains in the long disused graveyard belonging to the Methodist society of the town.

In the absence of any better astringent, Allen sent out the nurses to cut down the only wild cherry tree we knew of; and to dig up, and bring in the roots of blackberry bushes, of which to make tea.

The Rebel authorities, who had run off at Hunter's approach, now returned, and resumed control. To our surprise, and indignation, we found that a guard was again stationed over us. We demanded its removal. Maj. Johnson replied that the question of the validity of our parole had been referred to Richmond for determination. He removed the guard, till he should be informed of the decision. Meanwhile, Early came down the valley with his army; and the guard was replaced over us.

In consequence, a note was written and sent to Maj. Johnson, Acting Post Commandant, setting forth that our paroles were *valid*,—or of no binding force; that if valid, there was neither propriety or right in keeping us under guard; that if they were deemed invalid, we had no cause of complaint; but, that unless the guard was withdrawn, we should consider ourselves discharged from the obligations which the parole imposed. Although no reply was made to our note, the guard was *continued* over the hospital, and we left to draw our own inferences from such continuance.

During this period, occasionally one or more of our wounded, now convalescent, made their escape from the hospital in the village. No attempt at escape was made at our own, however. Maj. Meem, at this time, re-appeared in the village. With his return, an effort was made to send away such of us as were well enough to bear the journey south. The means of transportation were limited, however. If the regular stage coach, from Winchester and below, came up empty, they would load in fourteen of us; if it was filled with passengers, our party would have to wait a more convenient season for their journey. Up to this time it had been left to Dr. Allen to determine *who must go*: he being directed only as to the *number* to be sent. But now Allen announced that he had orders to send off the next day, fourteen of us; "and Colonel," said he, "*you are named as one to be ready*. I told Major Meem," said Allen, "that you were in no condition to travel yet, and he is coming up to see you, and judge for himself." And so we were prepared when he made his appearance that morning. "Pshaw!" said he, as he replaced my shirt, after making his examination, "Why *in hell* don't you get well, Colonel! I reckon you don't try very hard, do you? But you'll have to go! Don't you think now, you could take the journey if it was to your home?" "*I'd try to, Major*," was my reply. "Well, this is to Rich-



mond!" "By the way of Lynchburg? as Capt. Fox went," asked I. "How did you know anything about that?" "Oh! I didn't dream it." "Well, get well!" said he, "we'll let you off this time, but we can't keep you here forever, you know." "I don't want to stay that long," I replied, and the subject was dropped. "By the way Allen," he rejoined, "did you get your whiskey, to-day?" This, in allusion to the fact, that since Rosser's captain had robbed the hospital of every thing of the kind, he (Meem) had undertaken to supply us with what was needed. "I got what you sent me, Major!" said Allen, "but its *queer whiskey!* Lincoln here, had rather take his quinine clear, than in that stuff" "Where is it? get a tumbler, and let's try it," said the Major. He did so: not *once* only, but twice, and not by tasting merely, but by drinking, till he emptied *one* of the *two* bottles he had filled for our sick. He left us after a while, much to *my relief*, if to that of no one else. My respite was short however: for not many days afterward, upon Allen's return from the lower hospital, he again announced, that he was ordered to get another party ready to be sent away, and that I was again included among those to go. As before, so now, Major Meem was to come up, in the evening, to examine my condition for himself.

Allen, Lieut. Walker, and myself, were the only occupants of one of the rooms, and as the Doctor left to make up his list of those best able to bear the journey, I made known to Walker, (who, poor fellow! was on crutches and could not go), my determination of trying to effect my escape that night. He tried to dissuade me, on the ground that, weak as I was from my wounds and long confinement, I could not possibly succeed. But I felt that if I could get beyond the guards, I could manage it some how. Of course, I placed my chief reliance upon the aid I confidently expected to receive from any negroes I should meet on my way; and preferred the risk incurred in the attempt, to the entertainment which would be furnished me at any of the rebel prisons farther South. So I cast about for a companion, and calling Snow, of our G, to my side, made known my plans, and sent him out with some money, to hunt up the "Old Auntie" who had done our washing, and get from her some suits of clothes with which to disguise ourselves. He returned, having procured for himself, only, the suit required. While he was gone, I had enlisted another recruit, in the person of Doherty, a man of the 54th Pennsylvania. Snow was again despatched, with instructions to tell the old "mammy" what I intended to do; and also that she *must* send me a suit of her "old man's" clothes; no matter how ragged; and get him to meet us *that night*, at a spot designated, to guide us on our way. I had enquired of our visitors, at different times, as carefully as possible, of the direction of the different roads in sight from the hospital; the nature of the country, and the character and disposition of the people along each route; and now pitched upon the road leading by Rawley Springs, through Pendleton County, to Beverly, within the Union lines, as the most safe to be taken. But we wanted a guide at any rate. till we were fairly in the mountains. Snow's second attempt resulted in his bringing in a complete suit of well worn Grey for Doherty: an old white hat, *minus crown and part of its brim*, for me; and a promise from the old negress, that her husband should go to the rendezvous agreed upon, that night, and wait for us; and should take with him a suit of *old clothes* for me to wear.

So we waited with comparative composure for the appearance of Major Meem. He came at last; bringing with him a Dr. King, also a rebel surgeon. They examined me thoroughly, but gave no intimation of the opinion they reached. The Major discussed his whiskey as before; and *between drinks*, indulged in reminiscences of his life, while studying his profession at the Northern colleges, and confessed to having had many a good time among the Yankees. "Do you know, Colonel, how much pleasure it would give me to dine with you at your own home?" he asked. "How I should like, Major, to extend an invitation to you *now*, if I could only fix upon a *particular day*," was my reply. "Well," said he laughing, "it does look as if there

was a little difficulty about that, doesn't it?" "By the way, Allen," said he, "Haven't you got a *pair of boots for me?* mine are almost gone!" "I'm afraid," said Allen, "I've none that will fit you. There are none left smaller than nines, *and you wear*"—"fives," said the Major; "but we can't be too nice about the fit!" So Snow was directed to bring in a pair. Meem literally stepped into them, they were so large, but nevertheless was pleased: so much so that he insisted that King should also have a pair, and Allen sent for another one, which gave equal satisfaction, though none the less a *misfit*. Still they kept their seats! What else did they want? I was becoming nervous: now wondering whether Snow had not been careless, and now whether the old "*Auntie*" had not been treacherous, when Meem got up, and taking me by the hand, and wishing me a pleasant journey, went away with his friend King and their *new loves*, the Boots. Allen now closed the hospital, and crawled between his blankets; and, contrary to his usual custom, laid still, and almost instantly fell asleep. Nothing broke the quiet that settled down upon us, save an occasional snore from some heavy sleeper, or the measured tread of the sentinels around the building in which we were confined. We had planned to attempt our escape at as early an hour as possible. To aid it, one of our *fellovs*, good singer, and capital story teller that he was (he had lost a leg and could not travel), volunteered to go out by the front door, and entertain the guard, in the hope that the sentinels, stopping occasionally to listen, would get irregular on their beats, and thus give us a chance to slip from the back of the building, *between them*. Another comrade, on his bunk at a back window, was to give a low whistle when the *coast was clear*. Close to the rear of the hospital was a small shed, which was to be the first step of our flight; a little way beyond was a board fence, our second step; while beyond, and till we reached the cover of the corn-field, all was open to observation. Well in among the growing corn was the white oak tree agreed upon as the place of rendezvous. Doherty was to try his luck first, I next, and Snow was to follow last. Warned by Allen's low and regular breathing that he was asleep, I got up carefully, and, giving Walker's hand a hearty grasp as I passed him, left the room. My appearance was the signal for the others to set about their work. Almost instantly we heard the rich voice of our one-legged comrade, as he charmed our friends, the guards. With but little intervals the low whistle of our other friend was heard, and Doherty slipped out! I soon followed, and with but little delay gained the rendezvous, where I found Doherty. Snow soon joined us. But there was no guide! What should we do? Snow and Doherty in their suits of homespun grey were capitally disguised; but for myself, if once seen in our own blue, detection and capture was almost sure. Still, I was the most unwilling to remain where we were. With the directions which Dr. Gilmer (to whom late in the afternoon I had confided my intention of trying to escape) had given me, I felt confident of finding the house of a negro, in whom we could trust; and, finding him, of obtaining somehow, whatever disguise was necessary for my wants. But Snow was so confident that our guide would soon make his appearance that he absolutely refused to move from the spot. So, with an injunction to him not to wait a great while, Doherty and I left him, and made our way up to a corner of the field, abutting upon a piece of wood-land, where we could better conceal ourselves. While waiting somewhat impatiently for Snow to join us, we were startled by a musket shot, from the direction of the hospital; quickly followed by loud talking, and the sound of horses in quick gallop along the road near us. Had our escape been so soon discovered? Why is not Snow alarmed? and what keeps him from joining us? were questions each asked of the other. Every minute of waiting seemed an age; and after much urging, Doherty consented to go down, keeping covered by the fence, with a message to Snow to join us immediately. In his absence, I fancied the voices were getting nearer and nearer, and was much relieved by the hurried tread of Doherty, who came up with the story that beneath the tree where we had left Snow he had caught sight of from *six to eight* persons, who

were talking loud and angrily together. I may as well say here, what I afterward learned from Snow, (who, tired of waiting, attempted to find us, and failing in that, succeeded in making his way back into the hospital again, from which, at a later day, he succeeded in escaping,) that the shot which so alarmed us *was an accidental one*, from a falling stack ; that the loud talking we heard was in a detachment of Cavalry men on their way down the pike to join Early's army ; and that at no time in the night, after we left, was there anybody but himself under *the tree*. But this we did not *then* know ; and jumping to the conclusion that our escape had been discovered, and Snow already retaken, we also came to the conclusion, that our only hope of final escape laid in immediate flight. So we struck across the fields in a *southerly* direction, under cover of woods wherever practicable. Our plan was to reach the road which led, via Rawley Springs, to Beverley, in our lines ; traveling by a line parallel to it, *through the fields and woods*, as far as possible. Dr. Gilmer, who alone of all my new made friends, knew of my intention to escape, had given some general directions as to the route, and also, the names of one or two persons whom I could safely trust, provided, (and there was the difficulty) I could succeed in reaching their houses. We continued our way, crossing one or two roads, which we left, because not answering the description of the one we were in search of. Morning came upon us, literally wanderers in a strange land. If we could only have found a "little cabin inhabited by a negro family, with a wheelwright's shop, by the banks of a little creek," we should have found *safe hiding place, something to eat, and faithful guide* on our way !! As it was however, we hunted for, and found some thick underbrush, under cover of which we laid down and slept. Voices, in loud conversation, woke us late in the morning ; but, satisfied that we were well screened, we took another nap ! By noon we were awake again. We now held a long consultation ; but as we did not know *where we were* ; as it was not safe to attempt to move while it was light ; and as we were both dry and hungry, it was thought best to get another nap, if possible. We did not wake again till near sundown ! To while away the time, Doherty cut and trimmed a good hickory stick for each of us ; while I laid still, husbanding what strength I had, for our coming night's march. My wound was very painful ; and though I suffered much from thirst, *Doherty* professed to want nothing but food. Each of us was supported by the hope that we should yet find the house which had been fixed upon, as our refuge, after our first night's travel ; (wherein dwelt our much needed guide across the mountains,) and which we hoped Snow might have reached ; and when it was dusk, we left our cover, and with undiminished courage resumed our tramp, still keeping the direction of our previous night's route. We carefully felt among the stubble of a large wheat-field in our way, for any chance heads of grain with which to satisfy our hunger ; and we quarrelled with an old sow for the possession of a stagnant pool, in which she was peacefully reclining, that we might satisfy our thirst. Here we held council again. Looking south-west over the town, from our place of confinement in Harrisonburg, a solitary hill, sugar-loaf in shape, rose high above the surrounding country. From the information we had, we ought, upon looking to our rear to have seen this hill on *our right*, but we did see it on *our left* ; and we were forced to the conclusion, that, by some mistake, we had crossed the road which led to the Springs. It had been represented as *widely laid out, thrown up in turnpike shape*, and pretty well travelled. So, taking another drink, (*it didn't taste so well this time*) we turned our faces northward, and kept on till we came to a road, which, in the belief that it was the one we sought, we followed for a while under some of the pines by its side. This seemed to run out into a mere wood's path, when we left it, and keeping still more to the north, across the fields, soon came out into another road, along which we kept till the morning light warned us to take to the mountains, and hide. Hunger, and thirst, and anxiety as to our whereabouts prevented sleep ; and crawling beneath the shelter of some thick underbrush, we spent the day in watching the farm-houses



which dotted the plain below, in hopes of catching sight of some "*contraband*." At times, we speculated as to what had become of Snow, and what effect our escape had had on the fate of our comrades left at Harrisonburg. The sight of Rebel Cavalrymen near, riding from house to house below us, and holding short colloquy with the inmates of each, did not add to our peace. Our day watch came to an end at last; and at dusk, flanking the houses at our feet, we descended the mountain for the purpose of obtaining food, and, if possible, information as to our whereabouts. Our watch of the day had shown us that the house near by had no inmates, save the aged and grey-headed couple, who had responded to the calls of the Rebel horsemen during the day.

Of course, dressed as I was in my own proper uniform, save that a private's blouse had been substituted for the regulation coat; with my arm confined, and useless, by reason of my wound, it was not prudent for me to show myself. So Doherty left me seated with my back to a stone wall, and went up to the house alone. He soon rejoined me, having in one hand a pitcher of milk, and in the other *two* slices of bread, which we attacked without ceremony. The old man had followed Doherty, unperceived; and now, while we were eating, reached over the wall and placed his hands on my shoulder. "Who are you? Where do you come from? Where are you going? and what are you doing here, at this time of night," he asked. Too many questions to answer at once; so he was told merely that we were *Conscripts*, on our way to report at Harrisonburg, to the Rebel commandant. There had been a late conscription; and all conscripts had been ordered to report the day *after* we left. "You ought to have reported yesterday." "Yes! but we lost our way in crossing the mountains!" "Where did you come from?" "Moorfield." "How did you pass the picket at Brock's Gap?" "We wa n't challenged!" "That's strange!" There was a good deal of like questioning and answer; the result of it being to give us the information that we were on the road to "*Brock's Gap*," instead of "*Rawley Springs*," and that we were only *nine miles* from Harrisonburg. Having eaten our supper, we rose and followed the man as far as his house, *on the way* to Harrisonburg. Here we exchanged with him a pleasant good night, and continued our way in apparent unconcern. But, so soon as we were fairly screened from his observation, we retraced our steps. Having re-passed his house, we sat down to discuss our situation. Here we were, on a road we knew to be a very dangerous one, for (McNeil's company was at "Moorfield,") and parties of his men were continually passing between that place and Harrisonburg. Besides, while prisoners, in conversation with our guards, as well as those well disposed toward us, we had learned that in many respects an unsafe road to take. Still I could not make up my mind to turn back, in search of another route. My feet were already very sore, and inflamed, and I dreaded any increase of travel.

At length, with much difficulty, I persuaded Doherty it was best to *keep on*. It was nearly morning when we neared the entrance to the Gap. We were walking after the fashion of the country, *Doherty leading a few paces*, when, at a turn in the road, I caught sight of the light of a picket fire, which Doherty had not seemed to notice. My low whistle, or the snapping of a twig, upon which Doherty had incautiously stepped, attracted attention; and a sharp "who goes there," followed. We each threw ourselves upon the ground, close to the bushes which lined the road, and after a little delay, crawled through the brush to the river bank, (the Shenandoah) plunged into the water, which we forded somehow; and, climbing the mountain, hid in a thick clump of evergreens. Here we passed the next day undisturbed. Heavy clouds gathered in the afternoon sky, but we started at dusk, in spite of the rain which had begun to fall. At the foot of the mountain, we found a creek running across our way. We forded it safely, carefully feeling the way with our canes, and sat down on its bank to empty the water from our boots, and wring it out of our stockings. We had not finished, when the tread of horses' feet, and rattling of sabres, warned us of near danger. How my heart beat, as the foremost rider pulled up his horse, (a step farther and he would have

been actually upon me,) to settle with his companion the dispute between them, whether or not they were at the Ford. Fortunately for us they concluded that it was at a point lower down the creek, and reining round their horses, they rode away. Of course we moved as soon as they were fairly off; and after a little waiting, every thing being still, put on our boots, and walked away. But a new trouble met us soon after. We came to where the road forked. In the darkness of the night we could hardly see a hand before us; so, kneeling, we tried, by careful feeling of the road, to ascertain which was the most traveled, meaning to take it. But we could not satisfy ourselves, and concluded to hide again and wait for the morning. So we climbed the mountain, and laid down to rest and sleep. It was late when we woke, cold and stiff, and of course wet through, for it was raining hard, as it had all the night long. All day we watched the roads in sight, hoping that some of McNeil's men would pass, and so we be able to select our route; for we had now determined to make for "Romney" and "Moorefield," and *our lines* at "Cumberland." Late in the afternoon, it having cleared away, we descended the mountain part way, and hid in a thick clump of laurel bushes, almost directly *over* the road. After long waiting and watching, we caught sight of two Rebel soldiers, slowly riding toward Harrisonburg; and as they passed, heard: "Well, they can't be on this road, for the Colonel was never out of the hospital till the night he got away; and he could not have traveled so far;" and recognized in one of the party, a soldier who had been guard over us for weeks.

We *knew* now that we had been pursued; and that our pursuers, *on this road*, unable to hear anything of us in advance, were returning, satisfied that we must have taken some other route. Of course we felt greatly relieved at what we had just seen and heard; and waited, with a good deal of impatience, for the coming on of evening, that we might resume our journey. At near dusk we picked our way to the foot of the mountain, and soon after started. Our road wound up and round the side of the mountain; it was narrow, bordered on each side by tall trees growing thickly together, which made it pretty dark; and we trudged along with a good degree of confidence, greatly relieved by the knowledge that we were no longer being pursued. Once or twice, we stopped to consult at a divergent path, but were not tempted to wander from our better travelled road. Hours had passed, and we were still climbing; the road had been gradually getting worse, and worse; we occasionally stumbling over projecting roots, and stumps; when, all at once, we stood on the summit of the mountain, *face to face* with the newly risen moon! It should have been at our *backs*! How had we gone astray? and how far from our true route had we been led? Alas! there was no opportunity to enquire, if enquiry would have been safe; and with feelings a good deal depressed, we turned to retrace our steps, carefully examining the way, as we walked on, to determine, if possible, at what point we had wandered. Morning broke upon us, while still upon our backward way; and we went into the woods, for concealment, a good deal dispirited. We were roused from sleep by the crowing of cocks, and the barking of dogs, in the door-yard of a house not far away; and which had been *unnoticed* before. The clear notes of a bugle, sounding the reveillé, drew our attention to a party of Rebel horsemen in another direction, who were engaged grooming their "cattle." We were almost in "the open," so far as this party was concerned; and, digging our heels into the ground, slowly but carefully worked ourselves, upon our backs, *under cover*. We watched anxiously the departure of these soldiers; and, relieved by their riding away, were amused later in the day, by observing the females and children of the family near us, as, with *straight poles* for flails, they kept hard at work pounding out their crop of wheat. Way off, in another direction, by itself, and apparently in the middle of a large field of grain, was a small, one-story house, at which we determined we would apply for food, when night should come.



We felt gloomy enough ! My own condition called for all the nerve I was possessed of. My wound, from want of attention, was extremely painful, and besides, my feet were so badly swollen, and blistered, that I could hardly walk. In addition, I was weak from want of food, and suffering for water. Doherty, not having been wounded, was in better condition ; still he suffered a good deal. Notwithstanding all this, we started as soon as it was dark ; and going up to the house, Doherty obtained a *couple of slices of bread, well-covered with apple butter*, and, what *he did not want so much*, the company of the owner of the place, out to where I was seated. Of course it was natural that we should be questioned, and perhaps equally natural that we should not tell *all* the truth, or *nothing but* the truth. Again we passed ourselves off as Rebel soldiers, this time as returning from furlough ; and were not a little startled to find that we *had been* on the road to Franklin County. Professing to belong to Imboden's command, our friend kindly undertook to pilot us across the country, to a road which led to *Winchester*, where Imboden was. We followed him until we reached a road, which he assured us led direct to Winchester ; thanked him for his kindness, and paid him for his bread, and left him. Now here was a dilemma ! If we did not want to go to "Franklin," neither did we wish to go to Winchester, which we had good reason to believe must now be occupied by Early and his army. Still, in the uncertainty of being able to find the road from which we had strayed in some unaccountable manner, it seemed the best course to keep on. By keeping to the mountains, we believed we could avoid all the Rebel pickets ; and there would be but little more danger in taking this route, than the one by "Romney." True, if retaken, we should fare better at the hands of McNiel, than in the keeping of Mosby or Harry Gilmor. Besides, the distance to Martinsburg was less than to any point in our lines by way of Romney.

So we accepted our new situation with comparative cheerfulness. Once in the course of the night, we were brought to a stand-still, by the apparent *running out* of the road, in the thick brush, at what appeared to be the bed of a mountain brook, now completely dried. On our hands and knees we felt, (for in the darkness we could see nothing) for the foot marks of horses, or *fresh horse dung*, which would be a guide. But we failed to find either ; and after long hunting, came into a foot path, which gradually widened out and gave us a way of escape from the difficulty which threatened us. Warned by the coming daylight, we again hid on the mountain. After a sound sleep, we woke, and cautiously made our way through the woods to a point, from which we could plainly see what was going on in a farm house beneath. We were interested in watching the Rebel soldiers, who occasionally stopped on their way to chat with the young girls of the family, and in endeavoring to hear what was said. We heard enough to satisfy us that there had been a late battle between the two armies in the valley ; but not enough to learn at what place it was fought, or which party were victors.

Early in the afternoon, Doherty announced his determination of going to the house, for food. Although we could plainly enough see that there were no males about the house, I tried to dissuade him from venturing — at any rate, while it was daylight ; but he declared he *should die* unless he had *something to eat*, and off he started. I was relieved at seeing him reach the house, make known his wants (as I well knew by seeing one of the girls go to the "spring house"), and leave with some bread in his hands. But I was equally disturbed when, as soon as he was fairly away, one of the girls sounded a *conch*, and I saw a man, who was cradling oats in a field not far off, start on a run for the house. Hurrying to meet Doherty, we climbed the mountain, flanked the house, and, keeping under cover of the woods, continued our flight, till warned by the setting of the sun of the danger of again losing our way.

Seating ourselves, each discussed his *single slice of bread*. Now, Doherty found leisure to tell the cause of his rapid retreat from the house. He had asked for a larger allowance of bread than was first given him ; and while incautiously asking his way,

and the distance to Winchester, one of the girls accused him of being a *runaway prisoner from Harrisonburg*, and, in his confusion, he left without waiting for the additional supply he had asked for. But he learned that the road we had been traveling did not lead to Winchester. *So we had lost our way again!* Nothing daunted, however, we started as soon as it was dark. Morning saw us once more in hiding, with no house in sight. We slept pretty much through the day; and were on our road again as soon as it was prudent to travel. It had now become very hard work for me to walk. Not only were the soles of my feet badly blistered, but the toes were much swollen and festered, *and the nails of some of them had come off*; so that when day began to break, warning us to seek a hiding place, I felt really unable to climb so far as prudence dictated; and, entirely exhausted, threw myself down along side a fallen tree, in some underbrush, not half way up the mountain side. The violent barking of a hound which had found us out disturbed us. How mad I was as the whelp stood there, with glaring eyes and standing hair, regarding none of my coaxings! The voices of children crying out "Watch 'em, Brave!"—the speculation as to what "Brave" *had found*; and the promise of the father, that, after breakfast, they would go up and see, admonished us of our imprudence. But flight, at the moment, would only make matters worse; so we laid quiet, in hope that "Brave" would soon tire of his barking watch—as he did. When his yelping ceased, we rose, hurried to another part of the mountain, and, with a prayer for safety, laid down, and, after a while, slept soundly. In this manner, traveling by night, hiding by day, avoiding every house, except when driven to one by the pangs of hunger, we made our way for eleven successive nights; *once becoming so hopelessly lost as to feel compelled, by very despair, to rouse the inmates of a farmhouse, to get directions as to our route.* Fortunately, here again, the only occupants of the dwelling were aged people. The suspicion of the old man, who, in answer to our request, good-naturedly got up from his bed to put us on our way, was allayed by our telling him that *we belonged to McNeil's command, and were in a hurry to get to Moorfield, as we had overstayed our leave of absence.* "Then you don't want to go to Moorefield," said he, "for McNeil moved to Romney yesterday." "It's McNeil, and not Moorefield or Romney that we are after," said we; and, changing his direction, the old fellow led us through the bushes, and putting us on a road, which he said led to Romney, *forty miles distant*, left us with a hearty wish for success. Our situation was thus much bettered. We not only knew where we were, but the distance between us and our lines at "Clear Spring," for which place we now determined to aim; but had the more important information that McNeil was directly in our path. Our progress *had been*, and must still necessarily be, slow; owing not only to my feeble condition, but also because the weather was intensely hot, and, owing to the drought, water seldom to be met with; and it was dangerous to ask for food. We had depended upon finding berries in plenty; and running across a contraband occasionally. But we had seen neither during any part of our journey. As for water, there was almost literally none. The bed of every stream was dry; and we came across no springs. Never shall I forget my feelings at seeing, one night, by the faint light of a just rising moon, the glimmer of water a short distance ahead of us! We made short work of reaching it, and driving out a hog, which had made his bed in it! Sitting down, Doherty filled our canteen. It had been *two nights and two days since either of us had had a drop to drink!* I emptied the canteen at a draught! and Doherty, after filling it again, did the same! We sat a while to rest and cool ourselves, for the night was exceeding hot. Before starting, we thought best to take another drink; but now both taste and smell were sickening! Neither of us could swallow a drop! But we filled the canteen, lest we should find no more, and started again. I am amused now, as I recall the calculations we made of our probable progress. *Three nights more*, and we should be safe beneath the "old flag"! The 54th Penn. had been stationed in the

neighborhood of "Romney;" and Doherty claimed to know every cross-road and mountain path between that place and Clear Spring. Alas! how vain all our calculations proved! On our next night's travel we came to a fork of the road which puzzled us. After reconnoitering a house near by, and finding it occupied by *women only*, we enquired of them, and learned that we were but eighteen miles from "Romney" by either road; and that there was little choice between the two.

Our route led up over the range which divided two valleys. The way was steep, and the latter part of it rough and uneven. I had been for some time anxious to stop for the night; when suddenly the loud baying of hounds warned us of our nearness to some house, and a step or two opened into a clearing, and showed us plainly to the gaze of its owner, standing at the just opened door of his cabin. It would only excite suspicion to retreat; so we boldly announced our desire to join McNeil at Romney, expressing a fear that we had lost our true road. Sure enough, we had. The old man kindly gave us directions by which to regain our route, and, following them, we soon got out of his sight, when we took to the woods for concealment. It had been cloudy, which, perhaps, was one cause of our going astray. At night we were again on the road, taking now the right, now the left hand path; and in the morning laid ourselves down beside a fence in a thick piece of woods which bordered upon the roadside. A dense fog laid heavily upon the land, and hid from us a house standing but a short distance from our resting place. We were both so nearly exhausted, and our feet were so sore from repeated blisters, that we took no more steps than we felt to be absolutely necessary. Still, had not the fog so completely hid the house, we should not have dared to have laid down where we did. We had not slept, when we were roused by the dropping of a set of bars,—the passing by of some cows,—and a good-natured voice asking us what we were doing there. It was the same class of man we had encountered twice before—old, gray-headed, long past his prime. There seemed to be no others in this country! He was a Philadelphia lawyer for questions, some of which were hard to be evaded. Our old story, that we were McNeil's men, anxious to rejoin him, and traveling at night because we had overstayed our time of absence, seemed to satisfy him. He insisted upon our going to his house with him, which we did, thinking on the whole it would be safer to do so than to refuse. Seeing how difficult it was for us to walk, he became suspicious again at my explanation of blistered feet. "Why, you soldiers ought to be toughened to it," said he. "You forget that we are mounted soldiers," said I. "That's so," said he. We each got a slice of bread of the old fellow, and learned that we had again lost our way, being now *twenty-six miles* from Romney, instead of *eighteen*, as two nights before. I am ashamed to say that I *stole* from the house a piece of bar soap, as a dressing for my sore and inflamed feet. I would have bought it; but I had nothing but greenbacks, and was afraid to show them. Leaving the old man and his aged partner, we took to the road again, and, as soon as hidden by the fog, took to the cover of the heavy timber.

Never could anything afford greater relief than this soap gave, spread in *thick slices* over the *raw spots* on my feet! I slept nearly all day. At night we got along with no accident; and by morning came out on to the pike leading from Winchester to Romney, about *five miles* from the latter place. Here we begged a drink from a young girl who was milking by the roadside; and turned to the hill again for hiding.

The day was spent in speculating as to the probable presence of McNeil at Romney; the danger of being seen by any of his scouting parties, or of falling upon any of his pickets; and my ability, if not interrupted, of walking the distance remaining before us during the coming night. Doherty repeated, over and over again, the fact of his intimate acquaintance with the surrounding country, and his perfect knowledge of all the mountain paths and roads in the neighborhood. So that at night we started with increased confidence of success. We traveled slowly, and with great care; stopping frequently to listen for any noise which would indicate the approach of any party,



and to peer through the darkness for the faintest glimpse of any picket fire. We had no cause for alarm till we came in sight of Romney; but it seemed as if every house in that village was lighted up; and, after a moment for consultation, Doherty led the way across the fields, leaving the town well to the left—I following as fast as my crippled condition would allow. Each of us had many, but no serious, falls, in this cross cut over the uneven country. We struck the road again about a mile and a half north and east of the town. It was necessary to do this; because, directly ahead, ran the south branch of the Potomac, which we must cross on the bridge which spanned it there, or be compelled to keep on along the mountains, for, we did not know how many more, days and nights.

It was a night "as dark as Egypt," and we were tramping along, Doherty leading and I following as fast as I was able, when suddenly, from the darkness ahead, came the startling "halt! who comes there?" Before I could get up and interpose, Doherty answered "refugees." But to the next question I answered, giving my Christian and omitting my *surname*, as, on the whole, somewhat dangerous. To all the other questions, I answered with just the *least grain of truth*, drawing from the sentinel the somewhat doubtful "Well! I suppose it is all right, isn't it?" and in a confident tone my own "Yes, you d——d fool, do you suppose we should be here, with McNeil just in front, if it was'n't?" The sentinel (for such he was) made some reply, but in a tone of voice *too low* to be heard plainly. "*Let's run*," said Doherty. "No," said I, "He'll alarm the camp if we do; and there will be an end of me, if not of both of us." The sentinel's cross "what are you standing there for?" "are you going to keep me here all night?" admonished us, and we started towards him. It was too dark to enable either of us to see the other with any distinctness. Evidently, however, our new friend had some misgivings; for he joined us as we came up, and walked some distance, questioning us somewhat closely, particularly as to *where we came from*, and *where going*. As he left us to go back to his post, a most unaccountable noise, on our left, gave us new alarm; and it took some time and careful examination before we could determine that it came from a body of horses champing their rations of whole corn. A good deal relieved by this discovery, we came to the conclusion that the party had bivouacked in the woods, leaving a sentinel only on the road; and that we had successfully passed all danger. Doherty still wanted to take to the fields and run; but I wouldn't, for I couldn't; so we continued on the highway. A few steps brought us to a sharp turn of the road, where was a collection of *long* low buildings; among them a large barn. As we made the turn the scene which broke suddenly upon us, sent the blood curdling to our hearts, and almost completely paralyzed us. Directly in our front was a large mansion, brilliantly lighted from ground floor to garret, filled with a merry party of both sexes, enjoying themselves with music and dancing; while in the grounds around, groups of rebel soldiers, gathered about their camp fires, were busily engaged in cooking. Fortunately for us, we had not passed from the shade of the barn; and still more fortunately, the water, at some previous rains, had worn a gully across the road, at the very spot where our flight had been thus arrested. Instinctively we threw ourselves upon the ground, hardly daring to breathe, fearing each moment that we might be discovered. The sentinel who had allowed us to pass, now rode by, and asked of one of his comrades if he had "seen anything of two strange men." "I hain't seen nobody," was the reply. "Is that you, Bill?" was asked in turn. "Yes!" "Well, you'd better go back to your post; for if the old man finds out you've left it, you'll catch hell!" "Well, I don't know as I done right in letting them pass!" "No matter; they can't get out if they have got in;" and, comforted by this assurance, our friend rode back to his post. Soon the order to "fall in for supper" drew the whole party round the fires; and under cover of the darkness, caused by this movement, *we crawled on our hands and knees* across the road, in the gully in which we had been concealed, to what we thought a safe distance up the mountain side. We laid there a long while, listening anxiously for each sound

from the party below. At length there was a lull in the music; a *heavy tread* on the piazza floor, and a *voice which was recognized at once as McNeil's*, called "Sergeant Allen." "Aye, aye, Sir," responded the Sergeant. "Wake up Lieuts. Bradshaw and Scott, and then saddle." There were a few moments busy preparation; and then the same voice, with these preliminary words, "half-past four is the time, boys," gave the order to "march." It seemed an age after the command filed away, before all was quiet in and around the house. During all the time, no persons ever *hugged the ground* with a closer embrace than we did. The noise of closing doors at length satisfied us that everybody had left. We raised ourselves to a sitting position, and "*which way did they go?*" was asked by each of the other at the same time. One knew no more than the other; and in this uncertainty neither of us cared to move. Three miles ahead, upon our projected route, was a wire suspension bridge across the south branch of the Potomac; and McNeil, as we well knew, whichever way he went, was too wary a soldier to leave *that unpicketed*. There was nothing left for us, but abandoning all hope of escape that night, to take to the mountains again for safety. So we did; and made our bed in earthworks thrown up in the first year of the war. Here we enjoyed a sound sleep. At daybreak, Doherty, looking out upon the valley below us, informed me that the large brick building at our feet, where the "sound of revelry by night" had so startled us, was upon an estate owned by a Mr. Inskip, a well-known rebel. "I know," said he, "every path across these mountains; have taken them thousands of times on my way to and from picket. There is a house a little way off, where we can get a *good, square meal*. I have had many a one in it; and I won't to get on to '*Hanging Rock*,' (so called from its projecting part way over the pike beneath it) while it is light, and see if there is any picket on the bridge." I acknowledged that these were all good reasons, but still I told him I would not move; it was dangerous enough at night, as our last night's experience proved; it would be much more so in the day; and besides, after getting safely so far, I should feel ashamed enough to be caught, as it were, within sight of home. And to convince him that I was in earnest, I stretched myself out for another nap. When I awoke, Doherty resumed the subject, and after hesitating long, I consented to start. The movement came near being a fatal one for us, however; for all at once, without anything to give us warning, we came out upon a clearing where *young men*—the only ones we had seen on our whole tramp—were engaged in mowing. As we came out from the woods, they caught sight of us, and dropping their scythes, made for their horses, which, saddled, were hitched to the fence. We dodged back to the protection of the woods, and bending to the right, hurried away as fast as we could. Whether they searched for us or not we could not tell. We kept on with all the speed we could muster, till in making our way down a mountain, we came to a deep gully, bordered on each side by high blackberry bushes, at the bottom of which ran a stream of beautifully clear water. We had now been out thirteen days, and had had but *six slices of bread* (each) to eat; and we had suffered more than I can tell for want of water. So we gave ourselves up to this indulgence; eat and drank, and drank and eat, till we could hold no more. With a parting sip, we turned away, having first filled our "canteen." We were now making our last climb before coming to "Hanging Rock." "I thought you told me that there was but one or two houses about here," said I to Doherty. "So I did," said he. "What's all this noise then, of driving cattle?" asked I. He could not tell, and we made our way more slowly, and with greater caution.

Just before sundown we reached the top of the mountain, made our way carefully to "Hanging Rock," from which we were to get a sight of the bridge, and, to our dismay saw that the flats near it, on both sides of the river, were filled with cattle, horses, and wagons, all within a line of Rebel sentinels. Evidently our situation was not a safe one: and we started at once in search of a secure hiding place, and, deeming ourselves safe from observtaion, laid down among some bushes. Hardly had we done so, when



our attention was attracted by the sound of voices, and the tread of a picket guard, as it passed on its way to some point in our rear, higher up the mountain. It marched past so near, and we saw them so distinctly, it seemed impossible they should not see us. But, thank God! they did not discover us! So soon as they were out of hearing, crawling close to the ground, and stepping with the utmost care, we descended the mountain, and squeezed ourselves in between some huge rocks, whose sides rose far above our heads. From here we could catch a glimpse of the soldiers on the opposite side of the river, and could plainly hear what was said by those who passed on the road beneath us. In this way we learned that the party was McNeil's; which, having made a raid on "Oldtown," in Maryland, the night before, was now returning with their plunder. Feeling that we were safe, we moved the loose stones which interfered with our comfort, and resting our backs against the rocks, which hid us from observation, gave ourselves to sleep.

Morning dawned, and showed us that this party was still encamped. Towards noon all had gone, save a party (a picket, probably), who, although not visible, we could hear conversing beneath us. Nothing disturbed us during the day or night. We were awakened the next morning by the sound of distant cannonading, which fell faintly but with perfect distinctness upon our ears. Doherty, who alone, from his service in this region, might have made something of it, could not locate it. Before long, a small party of Rebel Cavalry came in sight. Soon a larger party appeared, wounded men in carriages, supporting each other, or held up by comrades apparently unwounded, army wagons, pieces of artillery, ambulances, caissons, all mingled in confusion, and a party of mounted Infantry, each man having a large bundle of straw strapped behind him, and all urging their animals to a speed unusual on a march. What did it all mean? The sound of the cannonading, and the sight of the wounded men, plainly enough indicated that the party had been engaged. Which party was victorious was a matter of more concern to us; and we strained our ears to catch, if possible, some word which would relieve our anxiety. At length the voice of some one urging his horse along the road and past the confused mass, enquiring "Where's the General? Where's McCausland?" gave us a knowledge of whose the command was. The anxious enquiry by one, of "Where do you suppose Averill is?" was met by the taunting reply, "Don't you fret; you 'll see him as soon as you want to!" The question by one, "Where do you suppose McNeil is?" was answered by another, who gave the confident assurance that "He promised he would tear up the railroad, and he never yet had disappointed them." All these things, and many others, were full of interest to us, but did little to relieve our anxiety. The column had passed by, and the perfect silence below and above us was leading to the belief that the pickets had been withdrawn, when the rapid tread, on the pike below, of a horse coming from the direction of Romney; the sharp question, "Where are you going, Major?" and the reply, "Over to the other Brigade," drove from the minds of each of us all thoughts of further travel that night. We had learned at Harrisonburg, on the march of the Rebel army down the Valley, that McCausland was brigaded with Bradley Johnson; and now the inference was irresistible that the "other Brigade" was Johnson's—probably at Springfield, across the river. So another night's confinement was before us, and still longer acute suffering (for such it had now become) from hunger and thirst. With the early morning the rear guard of this force marched away, and all became silent as death. This silence was so long and unbroken, that Doherty urged our leaving at once. I refused to stir. "Look down there, Colonel," said he; pointing to a house on the flat below us; "I have eaten many a good meal at that house, and *I shall die* if I don't get something to eat right away. Come, now! We can't either of us stand this longer! Let's start!" But I refused, and urged him strongly to bear our condition till evening. It was to no purpose, however; and with a promise on his part to be very careful in making his way out from our hiding place, we shook hands, and, with a wish for mutual success, parted. Left thus alone,

I was wondering whether I had not been foolish to consent to the separation, when Doherty's hurried return roused me. He had, while still within the protection of the woods, caught sight of the glimmer of the bayonets of a picket, on the mountain. *He was n't now so hungry as he had been!* and, if only he had not been seen, was willing to stay in hiding as long as I pleased.

We remained closely hid all day, nothing occurring which gave us any uneasiness. Late in the afternoon, a horseman jogged along below us, unchallenged. In the belief that our way was now clear, we crept from our hiding place, and cautiously made our way down the mountain, and skirted its base till we reached a point opposite the bridge. There was no picket stationed at it. But what seemed worse was the fact that its suspension wires had been thrown off their supporting piers, *on one side*; and it was hanging by the strands of the wire ropes of one side alone. It didn't seem possible to cross it, if we waited for night, if, indeed, we could pass it anyhow; and in very desperation we determined to attempt the matter at once. Our footing was the railing on the side of the bridge. Steadying ourselves as well as we could, by grasping the connecting stay rods, we *did* cross. (I could not have done it with my one serviceable arm, had not Doherty helped me.) Almost immediately we came full upon a party of men, by the side of the road, whose nods and whisperings alarmed us much. There was nothing for us but to march by as unconcernedly as possible, and, once out of their sight, to take to the woods and hide again. It was near morning when we started again; and having succeeded in flanking Springfield, turned away for our last rest before reaching our lines. We were now nearing a new danger. The old soldiers, who had been detailed to guard the bridges and stations along the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, had been drawn off by Sigel and Hunter, for their expedition up the Valley; and their places had been filled by the 100 days men, as they were called, who were neither well drilled or disciplined. There was danger on approaching the outposts, at any of these stations, after dark, lest the sentinel, in the nervousness springing from his inexperience, should *fire before he challenged*. So, in view of this danger, we started early in the afternoon, kept the cover of the woods for a while, and when within two or three miles of our journey's end, came out upon the pike, which we boldly followed. No sign of life disturbed us as we limped along. We reached the smouldering fires and smoking ruins which marked where a railroad station had been, unchallenged. *One house only* of the little village was standing; at the door of which stood *two females* exulting over the destruction. An application for admittance to the house, and for food, was *denied*; and we turned away, to cross the Potomac into "Oldtown," Maryland. The foot bridge had been also destroyed; and Doherty led the way to the "ford" below. We entered the water, which sent a chill through our bodies. The stream was swift, and it was with great difficulty that we made way against the force of the current. The crossing made, we sat down on the bank, to wring the water from our clothes. That done, we set out for the village. "Halt there!" sang out a long-legged fellow, dressed in the uniform of our cavalry, and who came out of a house near by, and made his way to us. But we did not care to stop; and he soon overtook us. "Where are you going?" he asked. "Up to a tavern, if there is any here," was answered, and he led the way. It was quite dark; so that, unnoticed by us, quite a crowd followed on after.

Just as we reached the door of the hotel, the old landlady was about shutting up for the night. Our civil request to be furnished with supper brought the ungracious response "that we could not have any." "Why not, my dear Madame?" "It's too late to be cooking supper for anybody, to-night." "You can give us some bread and milk, can't you? we are very hungry." "No." "Why not?" "That d——d McNeil has driven away all my cows." "Well, you can give us some bread and butter, surely!" "Yes; I suppose I can do that," and off she went on the errand. The crowd which had followed us, now pressed round, clamorous to know our names, and business, and destination, and where we came from; to but few of which questions

were any direct replies made. Matters were fast getting unpleasant for us, when the old lady announced that our supper was ready. We ate it without ceremony; and almost stifled by the closeness of the room (every window being shut down) and unsuspecting of any pending trouble, stepped to the door for a breath of fresh air. A crowd of some eighty to one hundred people stood crowding around the door, and shouts of "*make them answer*" greeted us as we made our appearance. A little bantam of a fellow, with a musket almost as large as he was, touching me on the shoulder, demanded to be informed who we were, etc. "*Friends,*" I answered. "But that won't do," he said. "Where did you come from?" "Romney." "Where are you going?" "Martinsburg,"—(most unfortunate answer for Early held the place, a fact which at the time was unknown to us.) "What do you want there." "That's none of your business," and thereupon the crowd shouted "They are spies, take them to the guard house." It was getting serious; and I offered if there was a decent man among them, who would come into the house and listen, that I would tell our story, and satisfy him that there was nothing to fear from us; but that I would not talk to the crowd around. So a spruce, gentlemanly-looking man was pushed to the front, who led the way into a side room, wherein lay a wounded rebel officer, victim of the little affair of the Tuesday before, the cannonading from which had awakened us in our retreat. To this man, I told, without reservation, the whole history of our escape, and everything connected with it; and I confess was indignant when I concluded, to hear him say "that he reckoned it was all right, but he "*was peculiarly situated*, and he didn't think he could satisfy the people outside." Of course, nothing more could be done on our part, and so we followed him to the door. He did nothing to try and relieve us; and again my little friend with the musket, ordered us to go with him to the guard house. We still refused; and some one in the crowd sang out "*Where's Thresher? send for Thresher!*" A short, thick-set man soon made his appearance, to whom I gave our history as before, and from whom I received a hearty grasp of the hand, and an assurance that he would set all right. He did so in a few words, and the crowd at once dispersed. It was now past one o'clock, and I turned to the landlady with a request for a bed. "You can't sleep in this house to-night," she said. "Why, what's the matter, now?" I asked. "Why, McNeil may come back to-night; and if he should, and you were in the house, you could not get away so easily," was her answer. "Well, come Doherty, its only one night more; let us be off!" But as I turned, this Mr. Thresher announced his intention of going into the woods with us. Waiting for him to go after a covering, we followed as he led the way into the mountains, where already some twenty of the citizens of the place, afraid to remain at their homes, were soundly sleeping. A dense fog had settled down upon the earth. We lay and shivered, but *could not sleep*; and at the early dawn, made our way to the tavern which had been so inhospitably closed against us the night before. Here, at breakfast, we met Capt. Squires, of the — Virginia Cavalry, down from Cumberland, in command of a small scouting party. We learned from him the situation of affairs in the Valley, and by his advice concluded to make our way to Cumberland. It was nineteen miles there, and neither of us were in condition to walk any farther. But horses were not to be obtained for *love or money*. All that McNeil had not robbed these people of, had been driven into the mountains for safety. We must walk or stay where we were. So taking directions from Capt. Squires, we got on to the tow path of the canal, and started. It wanted a few minutes to seven o'clock when we set forth. Nobody can imagine how we suffered, as we struggled on in this, our first exposure for months to the rays of the sun. At half-past two we were at the mouth of Patterson's Creek, only seven miles from our starting place, and looking across the river, caught sight of a repair party at work upon a partially burned railroad bridge; and what seemed better, something which we took to be a locomotive engine. So, spite of the shouts and gestures of the working party, who watched us narrowly, we plunged into the



river, and after many tumbles and much trouble, succeeded in crossing. Our friends had been endeavoring to make us understand, by their gestures, etc., that the river was not fordable; but we could not hear what was said, till it seemed easier to keep on than to return. As we came up from the river, faint and exhausted, our appearance attracted the attention of three gentlemen who were enjoying the shade of some large trees at the station house. I had called a young boy to me, and sent him off to get us some milk. At his departure one of these gentlemen came up to where we were sitting, with the remark "You are pretty well played out, I see; how far have you been traveling?" "From Oldtown." "That would not have worn you so!" "The sun is dreadfully hot, and we are n't used to it." Eyeing us still more sharply—"You are soldiers!" he said. "Well, that's a good one," said I. "Oh, you need not deny it; I can see that plainly enough! But you need not be afraid of me, if you are in Virginia. My name is Everett. I'm a cousin of Edward Everett, who was Governor of Massachusetts; you've heard of him, I reckon, and I am a thorough-going Union man. You want to go to Cumberland? Well, come up to my house, eat dinner with me, and to-night, when the engine comes down to take back these men here, I'll get a place for you on the train." I met this frank speech with equal plainness, and told him our story. As we were on the way to his house, we met the boy (his son) with a pitcher of milk. "Don't drink that now," said he, "wait and, have some whiskey first, and then, with your dinner, you may have all the milk you want. That's my advice as a medical man." And so we went to his house, drank his whiskey, ate his dinner, took his milk, and engaged in conversation till the noise of the engine warned us it was time to separate. Accompanying us to the train, he helped us on board, shook hands as he bid us good-bye, with a wish for our success, and we steamed away.

Reaching Cumberland, I reported at Department Headquarters. "How are you, Colonel? how did you get here? and where, in heaven's name, have you been?" exclaimed Gen. Kelley, as, jumping from his seat, he grasped my hand. "I heard of you, long ago, as having escaped; and not *seeing* you, or *hearing* anything of you, concluded you had been retaken, or had died on your way." "Heard of me, General! How could that have been?" "Some one of our men, who got away when you did, came in more than ten days ago, and reported!" The mystery was soon solved, by the appearance of our hospital cook. He had been allowed by the guard to pass and repass at all hours; was out of the hospital when we left; at his return, looked first for Doherty, and then for Snow, neither of whom could he find; recalled the fact that they had been consulting closely the day before; came to the conclusion that they had escaped; turned on his heels, was allowed to pass out, went to a neighboring house, where lived a young girl he had been making love to; roused her, and exchanged his clothes for an old suit of her father's, which she threw out of the window; started off; walked all night; and, after a good nap, started the next day, in broad daylight; was halted by one of a party of loyal men called ———, organized to resist conscription in their region; was conducted to the officer in command, to whom he told his story; was taken to a neighboring house, where he was given his meals, and kept secreted till night;—then mounted on horseback and guided safely on his way till morning;—when he was again ushered into a farmhouse, where he was fed and kept through the day, as before; when, mounted upon another horse, he was again guided on his way. And so, concealed and well-cared for by day,—and riding from station to station by night,—he made, in a *week's time*, a pleasant journey; while we, unaided, had had seventeen days of toil, exposure, suffering and danger.

Seeing my enfeebled condition, Gen. Kelley sent for Dr. Lewis, surgeon at the General Hospital at Claryville, to whom he gave me in charge. Here I was given the luxury of a warm bath:—was furnished with a change of underclothing, after my wounds, which were in a sad state, were dressed;—and, refreshed by a delicious supper and the cool breezes of the mountain, I rested in the quiet enjoyment of my accomplished escape.











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